

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

THOUSANDS VISIT AMERICA WEEK IN RAJSHAHI

RAJSHAHI, DECEMBER 10 -- America Week, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, concluded today in Rajshahi. During this three-day event, Ambassador James F. Moriarty and other Embassy officials met with thousands of people in Rajshahi to highlight the important ties between the people of the United States and Bangladesh. The U.S. Embassy has previously hosted America Week in each divisional capital in Bangladesh. The last America Week in Rajshahi was held in 2004.

This year's America Week theme was "Community," highlighting how excellent relations between the U.S. and Bangladesh benefit communities in the two countries as well as the global community. Events featured presentations, outreach programs, and site visits showcasing U.S. Government-funded programs in Rajshahi. More than 10,000 visitors attended the events and learned how to study at a U.S. university, apply for a U.S. visa, or participate in a U.S. Government-funded development project. The Embassy also sponsored screenings of critically-acclaimed American films.

The Ambassador hosted several events for political and business leaders, cultural representatives, educators and other Rajshahi residents. At the opening dinner, the Ambassador talked about the growing interdependence between the people of the U.S. and the people of Bangladesh. He stated, "Every day we see evidence of our interdependence. It is apparent in business, in transnational security, in environmental issues, and in many other spheres. The U.S. is a key partner in spurring the development of Bangladesh. Our open trading system helps budding entrepreneurs turn great ideas into profitable reality. Our top-notch universities help train the future leaders of Bangladesh. Our development assistance--\$5.5 billion since 1971—helps Bangladeshis develop new skills, get the healthcare they need, feed their families, and live in better-governed communities." (Please see the U.S. Embassy website at <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov> as well as the U.S. Embassy Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bangladesh.usembassy for the full text of the Ambassador's America Week remarks and photos from America Week events.)

In addition to hosting events, Ambassador Moriarty also visited U.S. Government (USG) funded development projects in Rajshahi focusing on health, education and livelihoods. Ambassador Moriarty visited a USG-supported Smiling Sun Clinic that is a part of the Smiling Sun Franchise Program. This program provides essential maternal and child health care, family planning services, pre and post pregnancy care, treatment for Tuberculosis, and immunization services to more than 20 million people - almost 14% of the total national population - through its network of 320 clinics nationwide. During his visit, Ambassador Moriarty stressed the importance of cooperation among the government, donors, business organizations, and communities to increase access to high-quality and affordable health services for Bangladeshi citizens, particularly at the grassroots level. The Ambassador also visited the USG-supported Modhumita HIV/AIDS Prevention Clinic today. The \$14 million Modhumita program

works with high-risk populations to prevent HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). The Modhumita program reaches 2 million people each year across Bangladesh.

This year's America Week coincided with the International Anti-corruption Day, celebrated worldwide on December 9 each year. Ambassador Moriarty and Anti Corruption Commission Chairman Mr. Ghulam Rahman spoke at an event organized by the USG-funded good governance program, Promoting Governance, Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (PROGATI). PROGATI, an \$18 million program, focuses on bringing government and citizens together to promote transparency and accountability by strengthening public finance management and oversight mechanisms.

Ambassador Moriarty visited several USG-supported education projects. He met with a group of religious leaders participating in the Leaders of Influence (LOI) Program at the Rajshahi Imam Training Academy. The Ambassador and religious leaders discussed the role of religious leaders in promoting good governance, advancing human rights and maintaining Bangladesh's tradition of religious tolerance and harmony. More than 20,000 religious leaders across Bangladesh have participated in LOI activities. The Ambassador also inaugurated a new USG-funded English training program for 80 Imams and madrasa teachers in Rajshahi. This program provides cutting-edge English language training to madrasa educators. This program is part of the USG effort to provide 21st-century skills to students from all educational backgrounds in Bangladesh.

At Rajshahi University, Ambassador Moriarty met with students and spoke about U.S. higher education and the value of cross-cultural education. Representatives from the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section and the Student Advising Center also discussed admission procedures for U.S. institutions of higher learning and answered questions about the application process for a U.S. student visa.

Ambassador Moriarty observed an anti-trafficking performance by youth performers of Actions for Combating Trafficking-in-Persons (ACT) in Rajshahi. ACT, a \$3.5 million USG- supported program, creates public awareness in rural and semi-urban areas on human trafficking and provides support services to trafficking survivors throughout Bangladesh.

National cricket stars joined the Ambassador for a cricket exhibition sponsored by the local police and the U.S. Embassy. The event helped build bonds between law enforcement officials and average citizens. The Ambassador gave cricket equipment donated by the U.S. Government to 15 local schools, watched a cricket exhibition featuring local police and former National Cricket Team members, and swung a bat himself.

=====

GR/2009